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SUBJECT: Minister of Commerce: All Work and No Clout

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Anthony Lino Makana, Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Minister of Commerce, Trade and Supply is the youngest, and one of the hardest working ministers in the GOSS. A former CARE project manager with a master's degree in post-conflict reconstruction, Makana has the qualifications and drive to help develop the private sector in Southern Sudan. However, he has few allies and little clout in the government and, as one of the few ministers to not serve in the SPLA, is perceived as an outsider. Makana spent most of the war studying in England at the behest of John Garang, and Garang recalled Makana to serve in this post. Without support and with few resources, Makana has managed to make a functioning ministry, although the benefits it can provide are limited because his colleagues have not taken the time to listen. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Makana was given ministry offices that are dilapidated even by GOSS standards, and he has one of the smallest budgets in the government. However, he managed to secure grants from the British development agency, DFID, and now has a full complement of computers and VSAT access to the internet, making his ministry one of the few with this capability. Unfortunately, the DFID grant that installed the computers provided minimal training. This has left Makana without any information management personnel to fix anything that goes wrong or provide tutorial help to inexperienced users.

¶3. (SBU) Makana has completed the hiring of his executive staff: two secretaries general, seven directors, and a dozen deputy directors, making his ministry one of the first to have done so. He has also completed his 200-day plan and a proposal to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) that outlines an intra-ministry strategy to establish a fully functioning private sector. His ministry's role in the plan involves the establishment of investment policy and a strong regulatory environment.

¶4. (SBU) Few of the other cabinet members have paid much attention to Makana, and he is often out of the loop in decisions affecting business growth. GOSS President Salva Kiir has highlighted private investment as a government priority, but the lead in this effort has been taken by the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Vice President's Office, with little effective planning and no clear vision on how to accomplish this task. Not only do other offices fail to consult with the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Supply on such issues as attracting investment, establishing free markets, and licensing companies, but Makana says they do not even listen to him when he makes suggestions or forwards proposals.

¶5. (SBU) Makana said that he will continue to work hard and put in long hours in an effort to prove himself and convince his colleagues that the best way to attract the right kind of investment to the south is to offer a stable business environment and transparent regulatory system.

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